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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: ITALIAN VIEWS ON APRIL 25 EU FOREIGN MINISTERS

MEETING (GAERC) AGENDA

REF: STATE 72185

Classified By: POL Minister Counselor Tom Countryman - Reason: 1.4 (b)(d)

Iraq

1. (C) MFA EU CFSP Director Luigi Mattiolo told Poloff that during the April 25 EU GAERC, FMs would discuss preparations for the June US-EU conference on Iraq. Italy wants to be sure Baghdad authorities views are also incorporated into the preparation phase of the conference.

MEPP

2. (C) Mattiolo said GAERC discussions would focus on EU support for Palestinian Authority reconstruction projects. Italy would review its bilateral assistance for Palestinian security and law enforcement training and the "insertion" of the program into an overall EU effort. Ministers will also begin dialogue on a coordinated policy concerning contact between high level officials from EU governments with Hamas-associated candidates in the run-up to elections.

Lebanon

3. (C) Mattiolo did not discount the possibility that elections could be successfully and securely completed by the end of May. He noted, however, that continued "instability" was causing some of his EU counterparts to look more closely at the date and that he expected some FMs to propose postponement. He said that Ministers, if there is time, might also discuss an enhanced monitoring mission for the elections.

Balkans

4. (C) Mattiolo said that Italy had joined consensus on an "Autumn" start date for the Stabilization and Association Process for Serbia. Ministers would discuss the very strict conditions (ICC commitments, internal economic reform) under which the process would begin. Ministers would also encourage Macedonian and Greek authorities to work harder on a solution to the impasse on the "Macedonia" name issue.

Sudan

5. (C) Mattiolo said that Italy shared US concerns expressed reftel over distribution of pledged assistance to Sudan. He predicted that the enhanced EU on-the-ground presence in the region would result in more rapid disbursement of the remaining 20 million Euros in EU-pledged funds.

SEMBLER

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